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AUTHOR	Carrion, Ruben
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ABSTRACT

Color Me Human, an initiative of Hawkeye Community College to provide student leadership and commitment by fostering greater appreciation for campus diversity, was implemented in 1996 through a student-driven approach. The Color Me Human Program not only embraces diversity, but builds individual commitment and community among students, faculty, and staff. The program encourages the development of student leaders to facilitate communication among individuals and to integrate co-curricular programming of various departments. Color Me Human has implemented its diversity measures through co-curricular activities, presentations, speakers, and conferences. The presentations include open forums that engage students, faculty, and staff in meaningful dialogues on diversity issues. These expanding diversity perspectives encounters are promoted through brochures and announcements, and are often open to the general public. Color Me Human has had a positive impact not only on Hawkeye's campus, but throughout the district as a whole. Personal responses to the program have been positive, and efforts will continue to integrate diversity programming into the general curriculum and promote awareness. (YKH)

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Color Me Human: Expanding Diversity Perspectives

Ruben Carrion

Hawkeye Community College

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VISION

The mission of Hawkeye Community College is to provide quality educational opportunities, leadership, and services that anticipate and respond to a diverse and changing community. One of the goals of the mission statement is to provide awareness, access, and sensitivity for campus diversity. To effectively demonstrate HCC's mission and goal statement, the Student Life Department in collaboration with the Student Senate implemented the Color Me Human™ Program. This student driven initiative is committed to the following goals:

- To empower student leaders to become the driving force in fostering an ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse learning environment.
- To generate maximum support and commitment from faculty, staff and students.
- To promote greater awareness and infusion of diversity programming into the college curriculum.

Our Pledge: To provide student leadership and commitment by fostering greater awareness, respect, and appreciation for campus diversity.

CONCERNS

Hawkeye Community College has seen its enrollment double in the past five years. In addition, the enrollment of minority students has increased by over 400%. The number of students with a disability and attending HCC has more than quadrupled, and the enrollment of international students representing 19 nationalities is the highest ever. Because of these dramatic changes in the student enrollment of our campus, it is imperative to build a more comprehensive campus community grounded in respect for differences based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, and national origin.

In order to meet these needs of our changing communities, the Hawkeye Community College Student Life Department and Student Senate leaders challenged the college community to increase awareness and to promote respect and appreciation for campus diversity; this called for active participation and representation from individuals of diverse backgrounds in the student body, the faculty, administrators, and support staff of the college. This effort at the grassroots level assisted in developing and implementing the ongoing commitment to embrace the richness of diversity in the college, our community, and the greater world around us.

The college is committed to equity and diversity in educational services and employment practices. All individuals have the responsibility for contributing to an environment of study and work that encourages and enhances the valuing of fairness, enthusiasm for diversity, and passion for respectful interaction.

William J. Hierstein, Ph.D. President, Hawkeye Community College

Hawkeye Community College Affirmative Action Plan

PLAN

To broaden the opportunity of promoting campus diversity, the Student Life Department in 1996 launched the Color Me Human™ Program as a comprehensive plan to not only increase campus diversity awareness, but to embrace it on many fronts with the goal of building individual commitment and community among students, faculty and staff. A 25 member Student Senate, representing the technical and arts and sciences transfer programs of study, endorsed the implementation of a student-driven approach, creating a more sensitive and welcoming campus environment in which respect for one another is a valued norm.

The Color Me Human™ Program also places a high priority on training student leaders to become influential voices on campus for the value of diversity and for better ways of engaging participants in dialogue with focus on issues such as gender, age, race relations, etc. The program is considered to be a process that moves individuals and small groups through a progressive linear continuum that includes tolerance, understanding, acceptance, respect, and the celebration of diversity. The co-curricular activities are designed to address these various levels of the continuum and move individuals in a positive progression that increases self awareness, fosters community, and develops the leadership skills of all participants in the celebration of campus diversity.

Another important component of this effort is the mutual goal of integrating the co-curricular programming of the Student Life Department with technical and liberal arts faculty, benefiting the total educational experience of our students.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the past 36 months, significant progress has been made towards this diversity goal. With a wide scope of co-curricular activities, presentations, and speakers, the Color Me Human™ Program reached out to students,

faculty, and administrators at six community colleges, three statewide educational conferences, and various groups and organizations in the metro community. The presentations include open forums that engage students, faculty and staff in meaningful dialogue on diversity issues ranging from cross-cultural communication to music to gender and race relations, just to name a few.

These *expanding diversity perspectives encounters* are promoted through brochures and regularly scheduled announcements via the local media and communication channels of the college. The general public is often invited free of charge to these events that are co-facilitated by students and student services staff who encourage dialogue, thoughtful listening to understand various points of views, sharing and re-examining one's own attitudes. Participants who attend these events during the academic year earn the Color Me Human™ button. The button symbolizes self-awareness and sensitivity for diversity; it also preserves the important message of "Celebrating Campus Diversity Every Day." Below is a partial list of the activities from which participants would receive the "Color Me Human" button:

CMH Kick Off Celebration HCC

Perspectives from Students with Disabilities

Production of the CMH Music and Lyrics

Perspectives from Women of Color Forum

Black History Month Events

Presentation to HCC Communications Classes

CMH presentation at the MLK Jr. Day

Student Panel on Cultural Issues

Speaker – "Ethnic Man" Teja Arboleta

CMH presentation at the HCC Metro Campus

Presentation: Diversity in Technology

CMH student dance choreographed

Educational Perspectives from Minority Students

Ethnic Food Festival

Presentation to Student Services Staff

Women's History Month Events

Presentations at Faculty Inservices

Student Production – "Keeping It Real"

RESULTS

As community colleges continue to experience the influx of a diverse student enrollment, it is essential that student support services and co-curricular programming become established components of campus life. The Hawkeye Community College Student Life Department and Student Senate have implemented a new initiative that

has had a positive and significant impact within their own campus; in addition they generously offered their expertise and time to an entire system of community colleges in an effort to promote the need for understanding diversity.

This sharing has been accomplished through presentations to the Iowa Community College Student Services Association during their fall conference, the Iowa Community College Student Leadership Conference, and the fall conference of chief student affairs administrators within the community college system. In addition, teams of students and administrators from the college have visited numerous community colleges upon request, bringing their message on the importance of understanding diversity and how it can be incorporated into any college as a student driven-program.

I meet diversity everyday... for me, diversity is everywhere; that's why I'm so involved.

Boris Sazhaev, Russian HCC student serving on Student Senate

We can learn a lot from each other; we can embrace each other, and we can work with each other.

Tracy Anderson, HCC Student Activities Coordinator

Other comments from students, professional staff, and chief administrators around the state of Iowa who have been made aware of the "Color Me Human™" initiative have all evaluated the program very positively. Reactions have varied from, "A new awareness on diversity," to "the best diversity presentation I've seen," to "Can you spend the semester on campus helping us?" to, "Thank you for bringing your program to our campus; now we have a better idea as to how we can make the diversity issue a positive and learning issue on our campus". Other community colleges who have hosted a "Color Me Human™" presentation have in turn responded by bringing a group of students to Hawkeye Community College to witness first hand the "Color Me Human™" program.

FUTURE BENEFITS

While the impetus for significant advances is already in motion, the commitment for diversity awareness, appreciation, and inclusiveness continues to grow. The initiatives noted above have been instituted as an ongoing program, with refinement and expansions the program is reaching out beyond the college community. Members of the Hawkeye Community Student Senate and the Student Life Department are partnering with high school students to develop, mentor, and implement a diversity program at the grassroots level. Efforts will continue on campus to

integrate the infusion of diversity programming into the technical and liberal arts curriculum by implementing an ongoing and visionary program representative of the issues that the campus community considers as priorities. These events could range from open forums of dialogue, to guest speakers, to cultural activities that compliment the co-curricular objectives of student development and learning beyond the classroom.

During the 1997-98 academic year, the Color Me Human™ Program was presented at the Regional Conference for the National Association of Campus Activities in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, October 16-19, 1997. At the Fourth Annual Conference of the Lt. Governor's Committee on Diversity, October 21-22, 1997, in Des Moines, Iowa, the Color Me Human™ Program received the Prism Award for promoting diversity among other educational institutions. The program was also presented at the 34th, National Conference on Student Services, in Orlando Florida, November 22-25, 1997. At Kirkwood Community College, "Building Community Through Diversity" Annual Conference, January 19, 1998, and at the 78th Annual Convention for the American Association of Community Colleges in Miami, Florida, April 27, 1998.

For additional information on the "Color Me Human™" Program contact Ruben Carrion, Director of Student Life at Hawkeye Community College, 1501 East Orange Road, P. O. Box 8015, Waterloo, Iowa, 50702. (319) 296-4027. E-mail rcarrion@hawkeye.cc.ia.us.

Program Name: Color Me Human™

Contact: Ms. Nancy Williams, Color Me Human, Inc.
5010 Austin Road, Hixson, TN 37343
(800) 470-4525

Purpose: To promote unity in diversity through focusing upon those human virtues which characterize a commitment to justice and which support an appreciation of diversity.

Background:

Color Me Human™ was initially an enterprise of two artists who formulated its name and graphics, distributing them on a wide variety of products for use in activities which promoted diversity. When Iraj and Mary K. Radpour purchased this company, it was with the intent of utilizing this attractive logo, which emphasizes a celebration of diversity, as a complement to their existing enterprises, among which were education and training in intergroup and interpersonal relations.

Program Operations:

The training approach of Color Me Human™ is based upon a recognition that leadership in promoting justice for all people requires certain attributes and attitudes which can be called "virtues," which are encouraged in every religious tradition around the world. In the long tradition of collaboration between the races in support of first, the abolition of slavery, and later, civil rights, we find virtues which constitute a template for training the current generation to leadership on behalf of all people, whether challenged by racial prejudice, cultural bias, homophobia, national or language xenophobia, or gender stereotypes. Color Me Human™ focuses upon four (4) core principles: 1) the oneness of humanity; 2) the value of diversity; 3) spiritual nobility as an essential prerequisite of effective dialogue; and 4) creative action on behalf of both justice and the spirit of community.

The Color Me Human™ approach also identifies two attitudes in particular which must be transformed, as they contribute significantly to institutionalized patterns of bias: 1) a patronizing attitude of superiority, sometimes unconscious, among those in positions of power and authority and 2) suspicion, withdrawal and passivity among those who have experienced discrimination. It regards these attitudes as deficits which can be overcome through education in human virtues.

Color Me Human™ offers a variety of training materials and activities which celebrate diversity, teach the cooperative virtues and define the behavioral outcomes of acquiring them; encourage effective dialogue to support intergroup understanding, foster the value of diversity in a community or workplace; stimulate initiative on behalf of fairness and inclusion; and encourage the use of the arts as an effective strategy for both engaging in intergroup cooperation and promoting a celebration of diversity. The core concepts in Color Me Human™ are being translated into materials which are appropriate for schools, colleges, businesses, and community organizations, and offered in the form of workshops, presentations, and facilitated dialogue.

A new Color Me Human™ initiative directs attention to the relationships between male and female youth, the historical role of inequality between women and men, power dynamics in sexual relating, sexual boundaries, and activism on behalf of abstinence and sexual responsibility.

Outcomes:

Color Me Human™ materials were adopted by Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo, Iowa for an extremely campus-wide program to create a more visible ongoing commitment to diversity, to generate maximum participation and support from faculty, staff, and students; and to empower student leaders to become the driving force in fostering an ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse learning environment. A video is available which documents this program and its outcomes.

While our trainers and educators have long experience in effective consulting on matters of diversity, their use of the Color Me Human™ materials as an integrated training program has just begun; Color Me Human™ is currently being evaluated for its effectiveness in a variety of settings.